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Regents e-SGR Program Continues To Serve Louisiana's "Student Soldiers"

Last spring, as Louisiana's National Guard and Reserve forces began to be activated - many for deployment overseas - the Board of Regents acted quickly to provide a way for many Louisiana college students activated for military duty to continue their education even as they served their country abroad. The Board approved an innovative program called "e-SGR" (Electronic Support for Guard and Reserve). The e-SGR program allows currently-enrolled students called to active duty to take the available electronically-delivered equivalents of their classes via the internet while deployed either stateside or in overseas operational theaters.

"The Board took advantage of an excellent opportunity to partner with the military to help our students minimize the disruption to their education while serving their country," said Commissioner of Higher Education Joe Savoie. "It's an ideal setup for activated students whose duty circumstances allow them to participate."

Through e-SGR, activated students can tap into Louisiana's "electronic campus," which is among the most comprehensive in the nation, including more than 700 courses and 13 degree programs provided by institutions throughout Louisiana's public college and university system. The system is complemented by the Board of Regents electronic articulation matrix, which makes it possible for e-SGR users to see at a glance how credit for their electronic courses will transfer to their particular programs of study.

Since e-SGR was introduced, "student soldiers" enrolled at institutions across the state have availed themselves of this valuable service, and many more are expected to follow in their footsteps. Denham Springs native Shaine Darbonne, a Southeastern Louisiana University nursing student and E-4 Specialist in the National Guard now serving at Fort Polk, was the first activated university student to take advantage of e-SGR. Moreover, Darbonne recently became the first student to complete a course under the program.

"My grandfather saw a story about the program on the news one evening, and he immediately called to tell me about it," said Darbonne, who was activated (for the second time) last February, in the middle of his sophomore year at SLU. "Since I was hoping to graduate some time before 2025, I jumped at the opportunity."

While serving at Fort Polk this past summer, Darbonne successfully completed Family and Consumer Science 251, a required course in the Southeastern RN program. He said that taking the course did not interfere with his soldiering responsibilities.

(More)

e-SGR Serves Student Soldiers

ADD ONE

“I suppose the only hurdle was learning to use SLU’s ‘Blackboard’ program [a software package SLU and many other universities use to deliver electronic course offerings],” Darbonne said. “But it was pretty easy to learn, and once I got comfortable with it, I had no trouble keeping up with my assignments. I ended up with a ‘B’ in the course.”

Mike Abbiatti, Board of Regents Associate Commissioner for Information and Learning Technology, said that word of the e-SGR program is spreading and more and more military personnel are exploring their options, particularly as deployments are being extended for many.

“I was on the phone a while back discussing e-SGR with a business student from Northwestern stationed at Fort Polk - the first upperclassman to pursue e-SGR, by the way - who was on his way to Afghanistan,” said Abbiatti, “and as he was talking to me, his buddy walking along with him who happened to be a forestry student at Louisiana Tech grabbed his cell phone and asked me how *he* could get in on the program. The point is that e-SGR can meet an important need for many of Louisiana’s college students.”

For more information on the Board of Regents e-SGR program call Mike Abbiatti at (225) 342-4253, or log on to the Regents website: www.regents.state.la.us.